

CLAIMS:

1. (amended) A tendering station comprising:

a movable housing;

acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, and at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions;

a reader for reading a magnetic stripe card, wherein card information read by the reader and response to said card information are transmitted over said wireless communication network; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal by said terminal interface for conveying transaction information and related information to or from a user.

2. (previously presented) The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein one or more members are attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and positioning of said station.

3. (previously presented) The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein said housing comprises a top surface having a cradle for mounting the removable terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

4. (original) The tendering station according to claim 3, wherein said top surface further includes an item handling area.

5. (original) The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein said housing comprises at least one storage area for storing supplies, cash, coupons, receipts and the like.

6. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said housing comprises at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from an item.

7. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said housing is mounted on wheels and includes at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering station.

8. (previously presented) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one peripheral device comprises a further display device for displaying transaction and related information.

9. (previously presented) The tendering station according to Claim 8, wherein said further display device comprises an adjustable support attached to said housing.

10. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one peripheral device comprises a printer for printing a receipt or transaction report.

11. (amended) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card is attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal by said terminal interface ~~at least one peripheral device comprises a magnetic strip reader for reading customer cards and~~ transmitting said card information to said terminal.

12. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one peripheral device comprises a keyboard coupled to said terminal for entering data into said terminal.

13. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one peripheral device comprises a scanner for reading bar codes and transmitting bar code information to said terminal.

14. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 13, wherein said scanner is constructed and arranged with said terminal.

15. (previously presented) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one peripheral device comprises a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting audio information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said wireless communications network.

16. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, further comprising a power source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

17. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, further comprising one or more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

18. ((amended) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card terminal comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached to said terminal ~~thereto~~ for reading a customer card and transmitting card information to said terminal.

19. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said terminal comprises an Internet browser.

20. (amended) A portable customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction in a shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:

a movable housing;

a handheld terminal removeably connected to said housing by a terminal interface for acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information;

a reader for reading a magnetic stripe card, wherein card information read by said reader and responses to said card information are transmitted over said wireless communication network; and

a customer display attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal for displaying the transaction information and related information to a customer; and

a printer device for printing receipts or transaction reports.

21. (amended) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card is further comprising a magnetic strip reader attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal ~~for reading customer cards and transmitting card information to said terminal.~~

22. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting audio information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said wireless communications network.

23. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising a power source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

24. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising one or more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

25. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said movable housing comprises:

an item handling area disposed on the top surface of said housing;

at least one storage area for storing supplies, cash, coupons, receipts and the like;

at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from an item;

wheels member attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and positioning of said customer service station within the shopping facility; and

at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering station within the shopping facility.

26. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for assisting a customer by identifying customer preferences and inventory availability.

27. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for providing power management of said customer service station.

28. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for sending and receiving messages to and from a host computer via the wireless network.

29. (amended) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card terminal comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached to said terminal ~~thereto~~ for reading a customer card and transmitting card information to said terminal.

30. (original) The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal comprises an Internet browser.

31. (amended) A portable tendering station for facilitating a customer transaction in shopping facility, said tendering station comprising:

a movable housing;

a cradle interface attached to said housing;

a handheld terminal removeably connected to said cradle interface for acquiring transaction information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer, at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information;

a reader for reading a magnetic stripe card, wherein card information read by said reader and responses to said card information are transmitted over said wireless communication network; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said station and in communication with said terminal via said cradle interface for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said transaction.

32. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a display device for displaying the transaction and related information.

33. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a printer for printing a receipt or transaction report.

34. (amended) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card is at least one peripheral comprises a magnetic strip reader attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal for ~~reading customer cards and~~ transmitting card information to said terminal.

35. (cancelled).

36. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a keyboard coupled to said terminal for entering data into said terminal.

37. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting audio information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said wireless network.

38. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing comprises at least one drawer for securely storing monies and credit receipts for items tendered at said tendering station.

39. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing comprises at least one storage area.

40. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing comprises at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from items tendered at said tendering station.

41. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing comprises one or more members attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and positioning of said tendering station within the shopping facility.

42. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing is mounted on wheels and includes at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering station within the shopping facility.

43. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, further comprising a power source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

44. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, further comprising one or more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

45. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for assisting a customer by identifying customer preferences and inventory availability.

46. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for providing power management of said customer service station.



47. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for sending and receiving messages to and from a host computer via the wireless network.

48. (amended) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said reader for reading a magnetic stripe card terminal comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached to said terminal ~~thereto~~ for reading a customer card and transmitting card information to said terminal.

49. (original) The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal comprises an Internet browser.

50 - 56. (cancelled)

57. (amended) A system for providing tendering and customer services, comprising:

a host computer for processing transaction data;

a controller coupled to said host computer for communicating the transaction information to and from said host computer;

a wireless communication network coupled to said controller for communicating the transaction information to and from said controller; and

a portable station in communication with said wireless communication network for providing the transaction information to said network, said portable station comprising:

a movable housing; and

a terminal removeably connected to said housing by a terminal interface for acquiring the transaction information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating the information over said wireless communication network to said an external central computer, and at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions;

a reader for reading a magnetic stripe card, wherein card information read by said reader and responses to said card information are transmitted over said wireless communication network; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal by said terminal interface for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a user.

58 - 62. (cancelled.)

63. (previously presented) In a system wherein a host processor communicates with a plurality of mobile terminals using radio data communication, a method for controlling functions available to terminal users, comprising:

issuing a terminal to a user;

receiving identification data specific to said user on said terminal and communicating said identification data to said host processor;

operating said host processor to hierarchically determine authorized functions to be made available to said user, using said identification data;

communicating a message to said terminal identifying available authorized functions; and

operating said host processor to provide user selected ones of said authorized functions to said terminal.

64. (previously presented) In a retail establishment having a wireless data communications network, wherein there is provided at least one portable terminal arranged to be connected to a tendering station for completing a transaction, a method of servicing customers, comprising:

operating said portable terminal detached from said tendering station to communicate with a central computer over said wireless network to provide information to a customer;

attaching said portable terminal to a tendering station to communicate with peripheral devices on said tendering station to process a transaction; and

operating said terminal while attached to said tendering station to communicate transaction data to said central computer over said wireless network.

65. (amended) A customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction in a shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:

a housing;

an interface attached to said housing for receiving and transmitting transaction and related information over a wireless communication network to an external central computer;

a reader for reading a magnetic stripe card, wherein card information read by the reader and response to said card information are transmitted over said wireless communication network; and

at least one peripheral device attached to said customer service station and coupled to said interface for conveying the transaction and related information to or from a customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said customer transaction.

66. (new) The method of claim 64, wherein said tendering station comprises:

a housing; and

a cradle interface attached thereto, wherein the portable terminal is a handheld terminal removeably connected to said cradle interface for acquiring transaction information, said handheld terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the transaction information over said wireless communication network to said external central computer, at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information,

wherein attaching said portable terminal to a tendering station comprises attaching said handheld terminal to the cradle interface.

67. (new) The method of claim 64, wherein said at least one peripheral device is attached to said station and in communication with said terminal, further comprising using said at least one peripheral device to complete said transaction.

68 (new) The method of claim 67, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a display device, further comprising displaying the transaction and related information on said display device.

69. (new) The method of Claim 67, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a printer, further comprising printing a receipt or transaction report on said printer.

70. (new) The method of Claim 67, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a keyboard coupled to said terminal, further comprising using said keyboard for entering data into said terminal.

71. (new) The method of Claim 67, wherein said at least one peripheral comprises a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting audio information, further comprising using said telephone headset for transmitting information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said wireless network.

72. (new) The method of Claim 67, wherein said tendering station comprises a power source, further comprising using said power source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

73. (new) The method of Claim 67, wherein said tendering station comprises one or more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device, further comprising using said infrared communication links to communicate between said terminal and said peripheral device.

74. (new) The method of Claim 64, wherein said terminal comprises a computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for assisting a customer by identifying customer preferences and inventory availability, further comprising using said computer program for assisting said customer.

75. (new) The tendering station according to Claim 64, wherein said terminal comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer program for sending and receiving messages to and from a host computer via the wireless network, further comprising using said computer program for sending and receiving messages to and from said host computer via said wireless network.

76. (new) The method of Claim 64, wherein said terminal comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached to said terminal for reading a customer card, further comprising transmitting card information to said terminal.

77. (new) The method of Claim 64, wherein said tendering station comprises a magnetic stripe card attached to a tendering station housing and coupled to said terminal, further comprising transmitting card information to said terminal.

78. (new) The method of Claim 64, wherein said terminal comprises an Internet browser, further comprising using said Internet browser to access said wireless network.